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BEGINNING SEPT. 12th ON NBC
SPIDER-MAN
AND HIS AMAZING FRIENDS!



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TM

THE HANDS OF SHANG-CHI.

MASTER OF KUNG FU

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY



GENE DAY

"Call me Shang-Chi, as my **father** did, when he raised me in the vacuum of his Honan, China retreat. I learned many things from my father: that my name means 'The Rising and Advancing of a Spirit,' and that my body could be forged into a living weapon through the discipline of kung fu. Since then, I have learned that my father is **Dr. Fu Manchu**, the most insidiously evil man on Earth... and that to **honor** him would bring nothing but **dishonor** to the spirit of my **name**."

Stan Lee
PRESENTS:

MASTER OF KUNG FU!®

Featuring supporting characters created by SAX ROHMER



"IN A FURTHERING QUEST TO REGAIN MY LOST ART-- THE ART OF LIVING LIFE AS A **WORK** OF ART, WITH EFFORTLESS GRACE AND CASUAL PERFECTION--I NOW ATTEMPT TO FEED MY MIND THROUGH THE DEPRIVATION OF MY BODY. IT IS THE FIRST DAY... AND I FACE MYSELF."

A PAINLESS RESULT OF HAVING LIVED

DOUG
MOENCH
WRITER

GENE & ARMANDO
DAY GILL
ARTISTS

JIM
NOVAK
LETTERER

BOB
SHAREN
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DENNY
O'NEIL
EDITOR

JIM
SHOOTER
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

"NO OTHER OPPONENT COULD POSE A GREATER OBSTACLE TO SURMOUNT."

"INDEED, THE VERY NATURE OF THE CONTEST PRECLUDES TRIUMPH. I MUST BOTH WIN **AND** LOSE, RENDERING NEITHER DECISION MINE TO CLAIM."



"AND SO, ON THE FIRST DAY, AT THE TIME OF GREATEST HUNGER... I AM LEFT WANTING."

HIS LAST MEAL IS UNTOUCHED--MUST BE SEASICK.



"ON THE SECOND DAY I DWELL IN COLORS, FEEDING ON THE CRIMSON... BUT ALMOST DROWNING IN THE BLUE."



AGAIN--? PERHAPS HE IS SLIPPING OUT TO THE BANQUET TO TAKE HIS MEALS THERE...

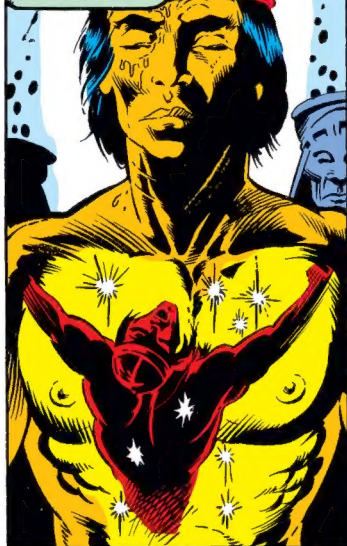


AH WELL, IT IS MY DUTY ONLY TO **DELIVER** THE FOOD.

WHETHER OR NOT IT IS CONSUMED IS OF NO CONCERN TO ME.



"ON THE THIRD DAY I AM BOTH LIGHT AND HEAVY, FEELING AND FLOATING ON THE SLOW SWELL, SERENE BUT WITH EVERY NERVE RAW. THE AIR, BREATHED DEEPLY, BITES SHARPLY, TANGY AND HOT WITHOUT HEAT, IT EXPANDS MY CHEST UNTIL MY SPIRIT STREAMS AND STREAKS THROUGH THE PRISON OF MY BODY, SEEKING SOME SMALL OPENING, CRYING FOR RELEASE.



"ON THE SEVENTH DAY, THE HUNGER DIES COMPLETELY. I FIND GREAT STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS, BECOMING A SMALL CONTOUR OF THE MANY FORMS AND TEXTURES OF MY LOST ART ... AND GLIMPING, TOO, HINTS OF ART I HAVE NEVER BEFORE KNOWN.



"BY THE TENTH DAY, I HAVE LOST ALL HEAVINESS, I DO NOT FEEL MYSELF TOUCHING THE FLOOR... THE LOSS OF WEIGHT SURRENDERING ROOM FOR THE GROWTH OF SPIRIT.



"I CANNOT GO MUCH FURTHER...

"BUT STILL I FAST..."

"...NOT YET ENTERING THE CLEAR VOID BEYOND THE CARES OF THE FLESH.

"BUT NOW, FINALLY, IT IS TIME TO SEEK NIGHT'S HEART, TO BREATHE THE DARKNESS AND DRINK THE MOON..."

HE HAS ANSWERED MY KNOCKS AND CLAIMED TO BE WELL, BUT STILL, I THOUGHT IT BEST TO --

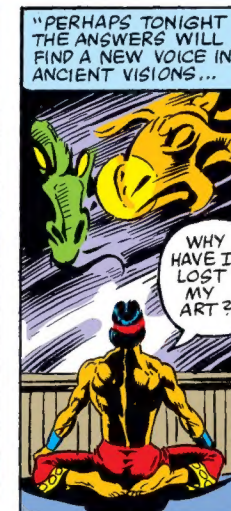
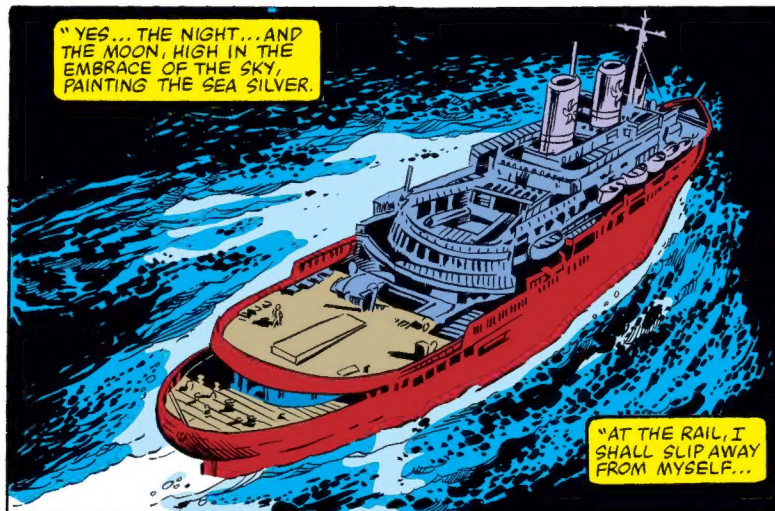
YOU DID RIGHT. WE CANNOT LET ONE OF THE PASSENGERS DIE OF STARVATION.

"...AND TO POSE THOSE QUESTIONS WHOSE ANSWERS ARE EVER MUTE.

TOK
TOK
TOK

YES?

YOU HAVEN'T EATEN IN TEN DAYS. NO ONE HAS SEEN YOU IN THE BANQUET HALL

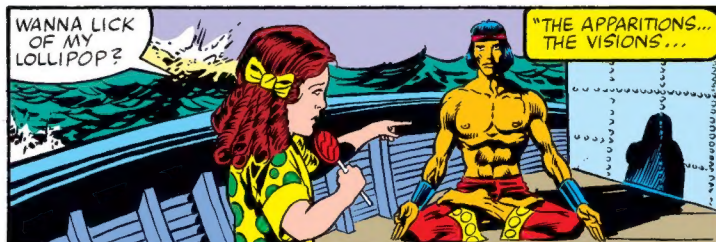




THEN THE GOALS FOR WHICH I STRIVE ARE **NOT** MEANINGLESS? MY LOST ART-- MY FASTING-- HAS FINALLY **BORNE FRUIT**--?

HEY, MISTER, WHO YA TALKIN' TO? WHY YA SITTIN' ON THE FLOOR LIKE THAT?

EH--?



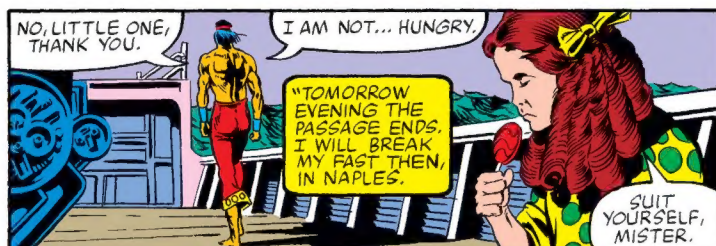
WANNA LICK OF MY LOLLIPOP?

"THE APPARITIONS... THE VISIONS..."



"THEY HAVE... FLED..."

"...LEAVING NOTHING BUT THE MOON, AND THE SILVER SEA."



NO, LITTLE ONE, THANK YOU.

I AM NOT... HUNGRY.

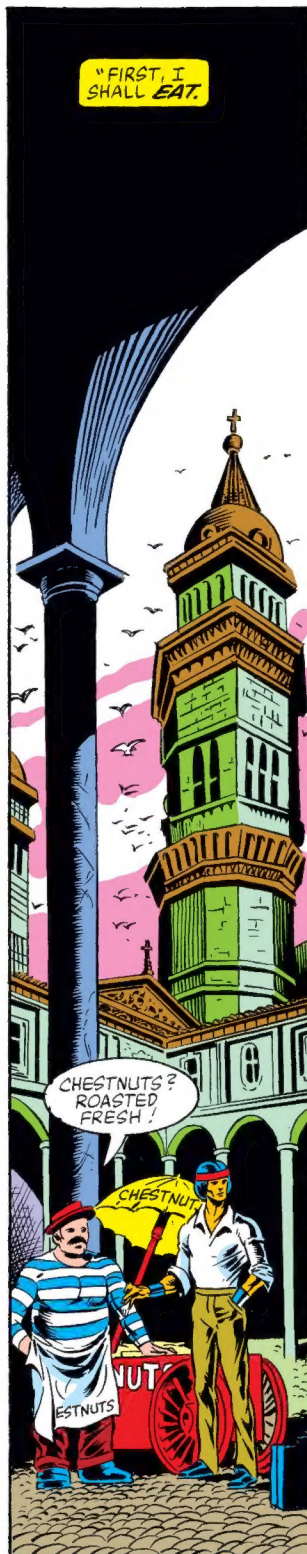
"TOMORROW EVENING THE PASSAGE ENDS. I WILL BREAK MY FAST THEN, IN NAPLES."

SUIT YOURSELF, MISTER.

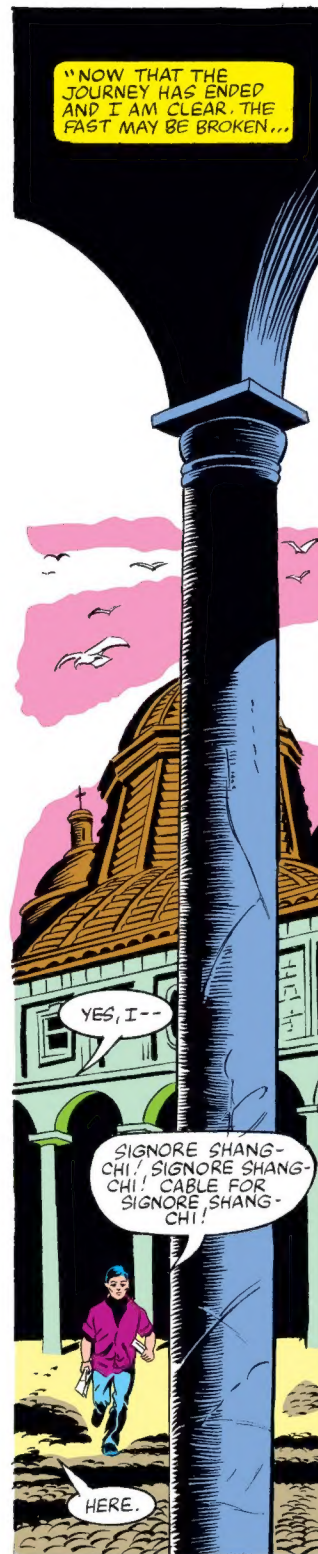


"NAPLES": THE CITY'S BEAUTY MAKES ME YEARN FOR LEIKO, FOR SOMEONE WITH WHOM SUCH BEAUTY MAY BE SHARED. BUT HAD I BROUGHT HER ALONG, THE ENTIRE PURPOSE OF MY HOLIDAY--OF MY RETREAT-- WOULD HAVE BEEN ALTERED.

"AND I AM SURE I WILL FIND ENOUGH TO DO IN THIS CITY ON MY OWN..."



"FIRST, I SHALL **EAT**."



"NOW THAT THE JOURNEY HAS ENDED AND I AM CLEAR, THE FAST MAY BE BROKEN..."

YES, I--

SIGNORE SHANG-CHI! SIGNORE SHANG-CHI! CABLE FOR SIGNORE SHANG-CHI!

HERE.



"THE PUNGENT SCENT OF SUGAR AND CHOCOLATE RICES FROM THE YOUTH'S HAND AS HE GIVES THE CABLE..."



EATEN HALF OF NAPLES ABOARD SHIP? CHEAT PLEASE, FIND AND RETURN DARK ANGEL AND REIGN HAVEN. SPEAK TO STORM- IN SEGRETTO'S MERMAID DOCKS. ALL HASTE VITAL.

"A MISSION? HERE? NOW--?"

SMITH.

"WELL, NAYLAND SMITH **HAS** PAID FOR MY HOLIDAY, AND IF HE NOW TRANSFORMS IT INTO A MISSION, AT LEAST HE WAITED, ENSURING THAT THE PASSAGE WAS NOT SPOILED BY KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT AWAITED ME..."



"I AM TO FIND SOMEONE AND RETURN HIM TO SMITH'S STORMHAVEN CASTLE IN SCOTLAND, THAT MUCH IS CLEAR. THE REST WILL MAKE SENSE ONLY IN ROME, BUT FIRST--"



"CHESTNUTS"

BETTER HURRY, SIGNORE, OR YOU WILL NEVER MAKE IT TO ROME TONIGHT.

EH--?



THERE IS THE LAST TRAIN TO ROME NOW!

TRAINS

THEN YOU **READ** ENGLISH AS WELL AS SPEAK IT!



YOU BET, SIGNORE!

TRAINS

"THE CHESTNUTS REMAIN BEHIND, IN THE REALM OF TANTALIZING AROMA."



"ABOARD THE TRAIN
TO ROME..."

I
AM SORRY,
SIGNORE--

-- BUT THE
DINING CAR
WILL NOT BE
OPEN UNTIL
NINE
O'CLOCK.

8:15

AND WHAT TIME
WILL WE REACH
ROME?

DINI
CAF

"I THINK..."

"...I AM
GETTING..."

"...TOO
CLEAR."

"THE TRAIN IS LATE, BUT STILL ARRIVES IN ROME
SEVERAL MINUTES *BEFORE* NINE."

"HAD I NOT ALREADY
DECIDED THE FAST
WOULD BE BROKEN
BY THIS TIME, I
WOULD BE FINE."

RAINS

"AS IT IS, THE
HUNGER
CONSUMES *ME*."

"THE TRAIN STATION IS SURROUNDED BY
RESTAURANTS--*ENGULFED* BY THEM--
BUT SMITH SAID ALL HASTE WAS VITAL..."

TABLA
SALDA

RISTORAN

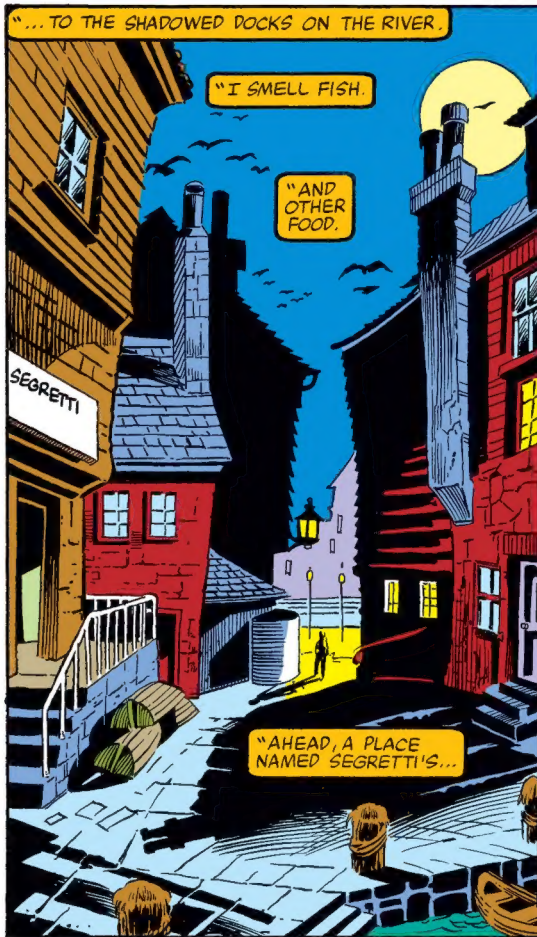
EAT

CALAMARI
MAMA MACCHIO'S

"A LIFE COULD BE AT STAKE--AND
SO, THOUGH THE EFFORT IS SUPREME..."

RISTORANTE

"...I MUST
PASS ON..."



"I KNOW, NOW,
WHAT WILL
HAPPEN..."

"THE FAST HAS GONE ON
TOO LONG, COAXING
ANGER BEYOND THE
REACH OF TEMPER..."



"YES, I HAVE
ALREADY LOST
CONTROL..."

"RAGE WILL SWIFTLY
FOLLOW, AND I WILL
PROBABLY STRIKE THEM
WITH MORE THAN
NECESSARY FORCE..."



"AND YET, PERHAPS
IT IS BETTER THIS
WAY."

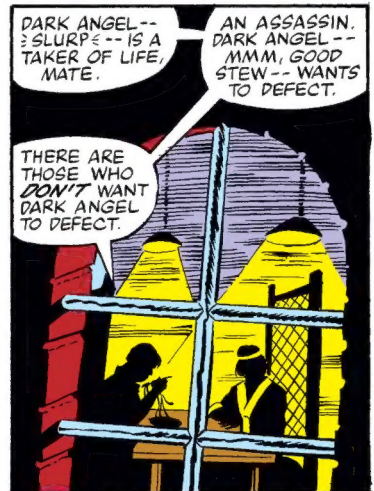
"MY OPPONENTS ARE ROUGH, BRUTAL,
BUT UNSKILLED, KNOWING NONE OF
THE WAYS TO EXPLOIT LOSS OF
CONTROL. MY OWN RAGE, THEN,
WILL ONLY SERVE TO --"

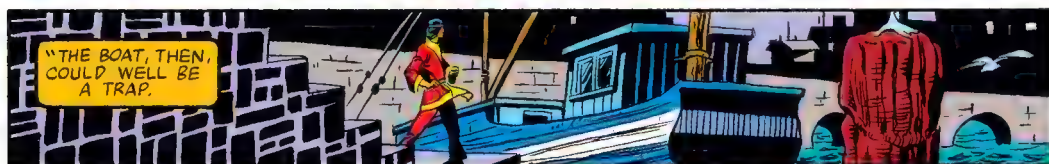
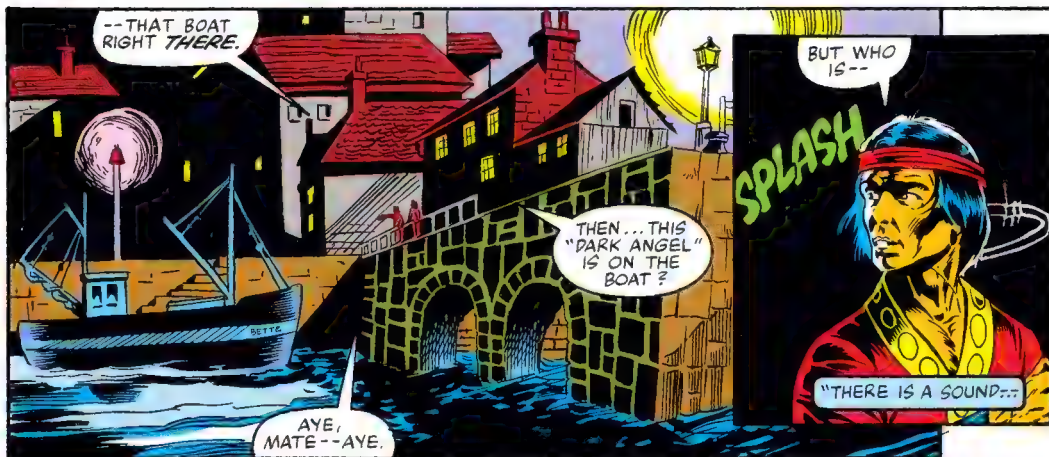


"--END IT
QUICKLY."

"STILL, IT
WAS BAD."

"I FASTED TO
REGAIN MY ART;
INSTEAD, HUNGER
DEPRIVED IT."





"HE BREAKS DOWN, AND THERE IS SHAME IN HIS TEARS..."

WH-WHAT MUST YOU THINK OF ME? IT...IT'S JUST THAT I'M OLD AND I...I DON'T WANT TO BE MURDERED. I...I WANT MY DEATH TO BE QUIET, SHANG-CHI...

...AN UNEVENTFUL AND PAINLESS RESULT OF HAVING LIVED.

"THEN PERHAPS THERE IS A DEFINITION FOR DEATH--DESIRABLE DEATH..."

NOW COME, WE MUST LEAVE ROME IMMEDIATELY-- BUT FIRST, OF COURSE, WE MUST GET MY DAUGHTER!

QUICKLY-- TIME IS SHORT-- SATA IS AFTER US!

WHO IS SATA?

ONE OF THE ASSASSINS AFTER US--THE ONE WHO HAS GOTTEN CLOSEST.

A DEADLY MAN, BELIEVE ME! HE HAS NEVER FAILED TO MAKE A HIT! AND HE MAY EVEN BE HERE IN ROME BY NOW...

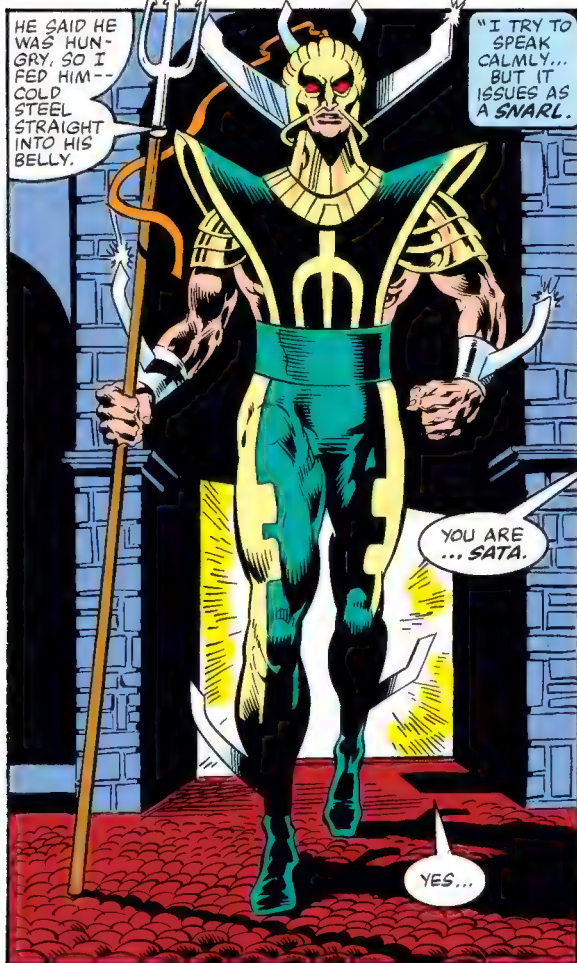
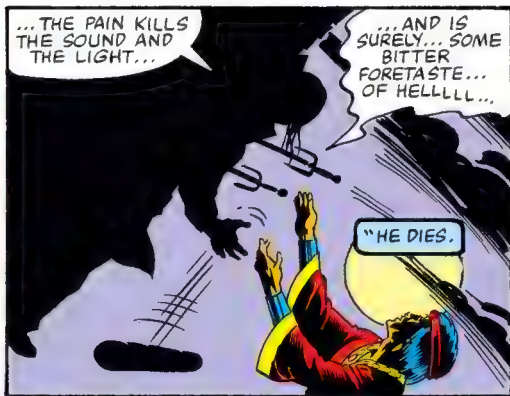
AFTER WE GET MY DAUGHTER, DO YOU THINK WE MIGHT HAVE TIME TO EAT? THIS BREAD, YOU SEE, IS STALE AND I'M SO VERY HUNGRY.

I MUST GET SOMETHING INTO MY STOMACH...

"NO!!"

"THE STREET IS EMPTY, NOTHING BUT A STILLNESS OF SHADOWS."

"HOW? WHERE?!"



"TOO, I HAVE FAILED MY ASSIGNED AND ACCEPTED MISSION; I *CANNOT* LET SATA ESCAPE."

"BUT THE HUNGER NOW BEGINS TO WORK SLY TRICKS ON MY SENSES -- THE GREAT STATUES OF LONG-AGO GLADIATORS SEEM TO BREATHE, AND SOME EVEN VENTURE SLIGHT, MENACING MOVES AS I PASS."

"THERE ARE HOLLOW, SCUFFING SOUNDS, AND MY INSTINCTS STRAIN TO DEFEND AGAINST ATTACKS BY PHANTOMS."

"AND AS I RUSH TO FACE ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST ACCOMPLISHED ASSASSINS, I AM SUDDENLY AWARE OF A CHILLING TRUTH ..."

"I CANNOT TRUST MYSELF."

YOU ARE SHANG-CHI, ARE YOU NOT ?

"HIM!"

YES.

I THOUGHT SO-- WHICH IS WHY ONLY THE RUINS OF THIS COLISEUM CAN DO JUSTICE TO OUR FIGHT.

I KNEW YOUR FATHER WELL, YOU KNOW.

INDEED, I WAS ONCE ONE OF FU MANCHU'S ELITE SI-FAN. IT DISPLEASED HIM THAT YOU WOULD NOT JOIN OUR RANKS.

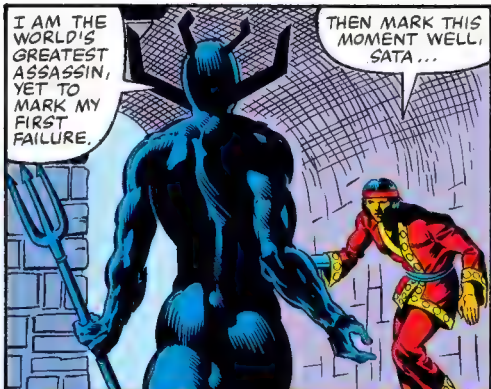
HE EVEN BEGAN TO DOUBT YOU WERE HIS TRUE SON ...

I AM HIS SON, BUT I AM TRUE ONLY TO MYSELF. AND TO WHAT, SATA, ARE *YOU* TRUE ?

MY CRAFT.

I AM NOW SKILLED ENOUGH TO WORK FOR MYSELF, YOU SEE, AND TO COMMAND WHATEVER PRICE I CHOOSE. I HAVE COMPLETED ASSIGNMENTS FOR EVERY TERRORIST ORGANIZATION IN EXISTENCE ...

...EVEN FOR SEVERAL WORLD POWERS ...



I AM THE
WORLD'S
GREATEST
ASSASSIN,
YET TO
MARK MY
FIRST
FAILURE.

THEN MARK THIS
MOMENT WELL,
SATA...



... FOR
YOUR TIME
HAS COME.

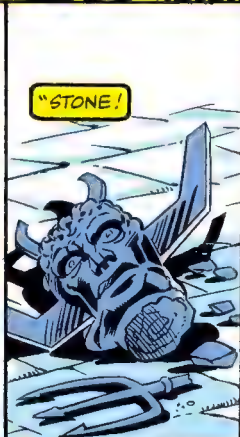


SHROK

"WHAT--?"



"HIS HEAD--!"

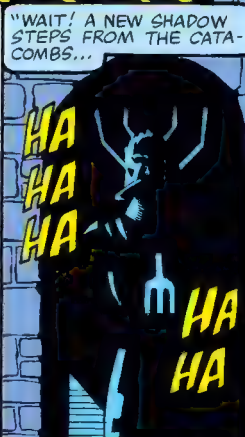


"STONE!"



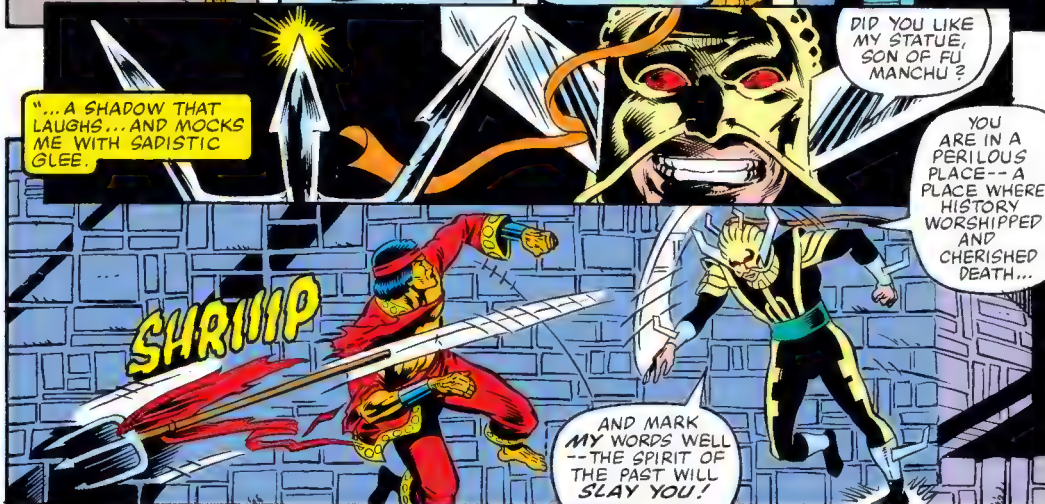
"THEN THE SHADOWS
HAVE CONSPIRED WITH
MY STARVED SENSES,
WITH THE ECHOES OF
THIS VAST ANCIENT
ARENA... TO DECEIVE
ME."

"AND THE REAL
SATA STILL LIES
IN WAIT..."



"WAIT! A NEW SHADOW
STEPS FROM THE CATA-
COMBS..."

HA
HA
HA
HA
HA



"... A SHADOW THAT
LAUGHS... AND MOCKS
ME WITH SADISTIC
GLEE."

SHRUIIP

DID YOU LIKE
MY STATUE,
SON OF FU
MANCHU?

YOU
ARE IN A
PERILOUS
PLACE-- A
PLACE WHERE
HISTORY
WORSHIPPED
AND
CHERISHED
DEATH...

AND MARK
MY WORDS WELL
-- THE SPIRIT OF
THE PAST WILL
SLAY YOU!

"HE HAS PERHAPS SPOKEN THE TRUTH-- BUT MY DOWNFALL, IF IT COMES, WILL BE CAUSED BY THE SPIRIT OF MY OWN RECENT PAST.

"ACTIONS ARE NOT WITHOUT CONSEQUENCES--AND THOUGH I ABSTAINED FROM THE ACT OF EATING, THE ABSTENTION WAS NEVERTHELESS AN ACT IN ITSELF...

"...WHOSE CONSEQUENCES I MUST NOW FACE.

SURELY YOU ARE A DOUBLE-- MERELY POSING AS SHANG-CHI? YOU CANNOT BE THE REAL MAN, CAN YOU?

NO, YOU ARE TOO SLOW.

"AGAIN, SATA SPEAKS THE TRUTH. THE FAST SHOULD HAVE BEEN BROKEN LONG AGO. IT HAS SERVED ITS PURPOSE...

KTANG

"THERE IS NO FURTHER STRENGTH IN IT NOW-- NOTHING BUT INCREASING WEAKNESS'...

TOO CLUMSY... WITH AN AWKWARDNESS MY FEE DOES NOT WARRANT.

THEY SEND WOUNDED, STARVING DOGS TO DEAL WITH THE LIKES OF YOU!

"NO! DO NOT FALL INTO HIS TRAP!

"DO NOT SUCCUMB TO ANGER! CONCENTRATE ON SOMETHING ELSE!

"ON THE STRONG TIMES BEFORE THE FAST!

"ON...

"...THE PAST?



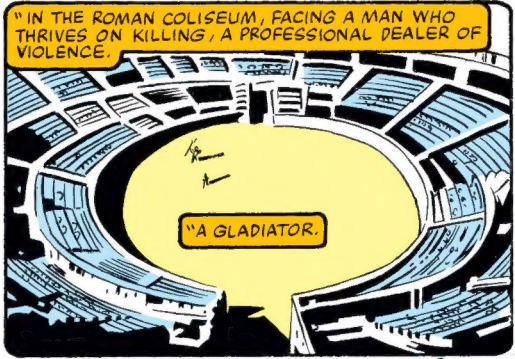
"CONFUSION: THE DARKNESS OF NIGHT HAS BECOME BRIGHT, BLAZING DAY.

"MY SKIN IS SHEATHED IN METAL MADE HOT BY THE BURNING SUN.

"THE HUSH OF OUR DESERTED BATTLE-GROUND GIVES WAY TO THE RAUCOUS SHOUTS AND STRIDENT SCREAMS OF SADISTIC WELL-FED SATYRS... AND MY BLOOD RUNS COLD.

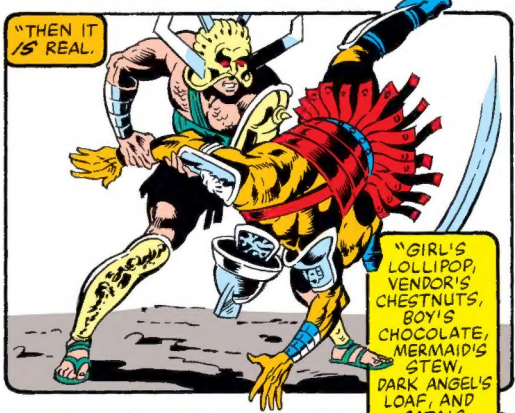
"NOTHING IS REAL. I AM NOT HERE. IT IS A DREAM. THE DARK SIDE OF MY EARLIER AUDIENCE WITH THE ETERNAL SPIRITS OF LOST ART.

"BUT WHAT IS REAL THEN? WHERE AM I?"



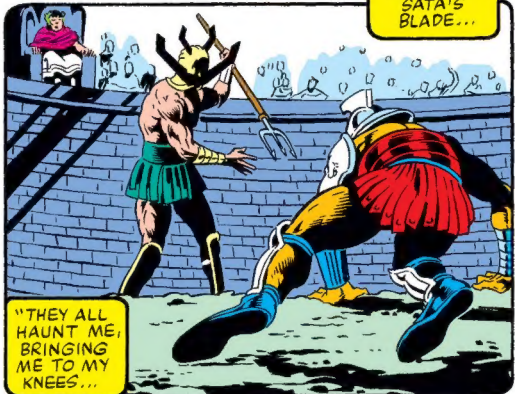
"IN THE ROMAN COLISEUM, FACING A MAN WHO THRIVES ON KILLING, A PROFESSIONAL DEALER OF VIOLENCE.

"A GLADIATOR.



"THEN IT IS REAL.

"GIRL'S LOLLIPOP, VENDOR'S CHESTNUTS, BOY'S CHOCOLATE, MERMAID'S STEW, DARK ANGEL'S LOAF, AND SATA'S BLADE...

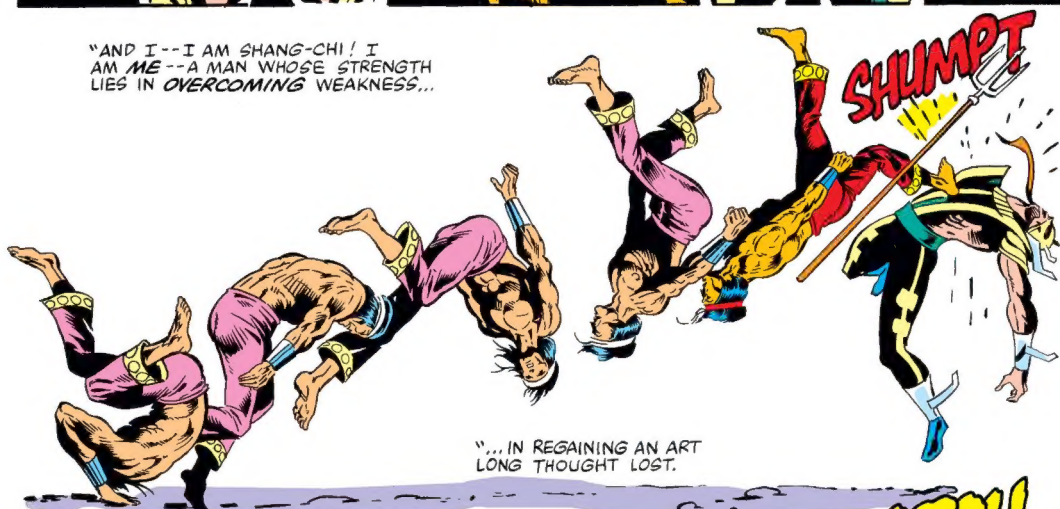


"THEY ALL HAUNT ME, BRINGING ME TO MY KNEES..."



"... AS THE OBESE EMPEROR CLUTCHES HIS GRAPES AND POINTS TO HELL.

DEATH.





"IT IS NOT YET OVER-- BUT WHY PROLONG IT BY PRETENDING IT IS?"



"BETTER TO PRETEND FLIGHT..."

"YES-- NOW ~~HE~~ FALLS INTO THE TRAP."

"WAIT..."



"...WAIT..."

"...WAIT....."

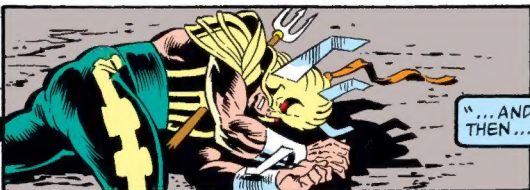


"NOW!!"

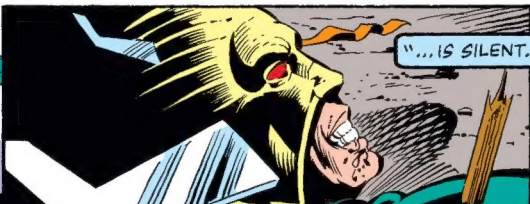
HNTOKT



"THE GHOSTLY ROAR OF THE ANCIENT CROWD FILLS THE ARENA ONE LAST TIME..."



"...AND THEN..."



"...IS SILENT..."



"SHOULD I BELIEVE IT THIS TIME?"

"YES."

"HIS WORDS WERE MARKED WELL-- BUT BY INVERTED TRUTH."

"FOR, BY THE SPIRIT OF THE PAST WAS ~~HE~~ SLAIN...AND IT WAS FAR FROM A PAINLESS RESULT OF HAVING LIVED."



